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Mexican officials agree to draft a rescue plan for tequila agave after prices fall 92%

Authorities and industry groups said speculative planting flooded the market, abandoned fields spread pests and new controls will target records, planting and the agave weevil

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Federal and Jalisco state authorities, tequila industry groups and regulators agreed on Monday, November 2, to begin putting together a plan to address mounting problems in Mexico’s agave-tequila chain after a surge in agave production pushed prices sharply lower.

The agreement was reached at a meeting in Guadalajara attended by the federal Agriculture and Rural Development Ministry, the Tequila Regulatory Council, known as the CRT, the National Chamber of the Tequila Industry, or CNIT, and representatives of the agroindustrial sector. According to the participants, the meeting focused on the blue Weber agave, the only variety permitted for tequila production, and on a broader set of issues affecting growers and distillers.

Columba López Gutiérrez, head of the federal Agriculture and Rural Development Ministry, led the meeting at the CRT’s facilities. Officials and industry representatives reviewed the number of producers, the registration and updating of plantations, long-term planning for new plantings, plant health measures and steps to protect producers facing a severe drop in crop prices.

The pressure on the sector has been building for years. Participants said agave output had risen excessively after speculative planting accumulated over time. That oversupply has driven agave prices 92% below 2024 levels, according to the discussions reported after the meeting. The collapse has left some fields abandoned, creating another problem for nearby farms as pests spread from unattended plots.

A major part of the plan now under discussion is phytosanitary control. Officials proposed working with the National Service for Agrifood Health, Safety and Quality, known as Senasica, on a prevention and pest-control campaign for agave, with special attention to the picudo, or agave weevil. The pest can damage plants and reduce yields, making it a direct threat to growers already dealing with weak prices.

Eduardo Ron Ramos, Jalisco’s agriculture secretary, said the state could provide drones from its plant health agency for a federal program aimed at reducing the effects of the weevil. The use of drones would be part of an early mitigation effort as authorities try to limit damage in producing areas.

The meeting also covered soil recovery and work in deforested zones, two issues tied to the rapid expansion of plantings in recent years. Participants discussed the need for better planning of future plantations and for alternatives that could improve marketing conditions for agave growers, many of whom now face a market where supply has far outpaced demand.

The effort matters beyond the farm sector because blue Weber agave is the essential raw material for tequila, one of Mexico’s most important spirits. A prolonged collapse in agave prices may help some buyers in the short term, but it can also weaken growers, encourage field abandonment and make future supply less stable if planting decisions continue to swing sharply between shortage and oversupply.

For now, the authorities and industry groups have agreed on a joint approach rather than a final package. The work ahead includes updating plantation records, coordinating plant health actions, monitoring pests and trying to bring more order to planting decisions after years of unchecked expansion.